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ABSTRACT

An International Congress on Environmental Education has been announced for Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), during late summer 1987, to mark the tenth anniversary of the October 1977 Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, held in Tbilisi, Georgia, USSR. This document reviews the outcome of the 1977 conference, discusses briefly the follow-up activities of the past decade, and indicates the apparent baseline for the 1987 congress. The 1977 conference is described, including its major recommendations and the topics that it addressed. Summaries produced as a result of the conference are discussed, along with follow-up activities that occurred in the United States. These included efforts coordinated by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education, Subcommittee on Environmental Education (FICE/SEE), by the Alliance for Environmental Education (AEE), and by the International Society for Environmental Education (ISEE). Preparatory activities for the Tbilisi + 10 conference are outlined, including ISEE workshops held in 1984 and 1986 as a part of the annual conferences of the North American Association for Environmental Education. (TW)

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THE "TBILISI + 10" INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS: BACKGROUND

An International Congress on Environmental Education has been announced for Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), during late summer 1987, to mark the tenth anniversary of the October 1977 Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, held in Tbilisi, Georgia, USSR. A planning group composed primarily of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) representatives, along with members of the Soviet Man and Biosphere (MAB) Committee, is scheduled to meet in December, 1986, to develop detailed plans.

Sixty-six member states of UNESCO sent official governmental delegations to the Tbilisi Conference, which was organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Also attending were observers from two nonmember states, eight other United Nations organizations, three inter-governmental organizations, and twenty international nongovernmental organizations. Because the United States government is not currently a member of UNESCO, it is unlikely that it will be officially represented at the 1987 conference, except perhaps as an observer. Thus, U.S. involvement will almost necessarily be of a non-governmental nature. The purpose of this Digest is to review the outcomes of the 1977 conference, to discuss briefly the follow-up activities of the past decade and to some extent worldwide, and to indicate the apparent baseline for the 1987 congress.

The 1977 Conference - Overview

The stated purpose of the "Tbilisi plus Ten" congress is to review the successes and failures of the 1977 conference recommendations. Specifically, a *Declaration of the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education* (UNESCO, 1978, pp. 24-25) was produced, accompanied by 41 recommendations detailing "The Role, Objectives, and Guiding Principles of Environmental Education," "Strategies for the Development of Environmental Education at the National Level," and "International and Regional Cooperation" (UNESCO, 1978, pp. 25-51).

Topics addressed on the 1977 agenda included (UNESCO, 1978, p. 8): major environmental problems in contemporary society; the role of education in facing the challenges of environmental problems; current efforts at the national and international levels for the development of environmental education; strategies for the development of environmental education at the national level; regional and international cooperation for the development of environmental education; and needs and modalities. Action items specifically noted in the Tbilisi Declaration included:

- Appealing "...to member states to include in their educational policies measures designed to introduce environmental concerns, activities, and contents into their educational systems;"
- Inviting "...educational authorities to promote and intensify thinking, research, and innovation in regard to environmental education...;"
- Urging "...member states to collaborate in this field, in particular by exchanging experiences, research findings, documentation and materials and by making their training facilities widely available to teachers and specialists from other countries...;" and
- Appealing "...to the international community to give generously of its aid in order to strengthen this collaboration in a field which symbolizes the need for solidarity of all peoples and may be regarded as particularly conducive to the promotion of international understanding and to the cause of peace." (UNESCO, 1978, pp. 24-25)

The 1977 Conference - Summary

In a report summarizing the outcomes of the 1977 conference, Stapp (1978, p. 41) noted that

> ...there was a remarkable amount of agreement . . . at both the conceptual and strategy levels between the developing and developed countries, the Eastern and Western European countries, and within the developing countries. There was also, at the end of the conference, a consensus among the delegates from all perspectives, including UNESCO, UNEP, and various UN agencies, the member states, and other international organizations that great progress had been made toward establishing a valid framework for international environmental education. The next step is to monitor each of the Tbilisi recommendations and to assist countries in their implementation."

A summary report issued by the U.S. delegation through the Subcommittee on Environmental Education of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE/SEE, 1978, pp. 11-13) identified these particular items as among those requiring thought and study:

- a perceived emerging "emphasis on the quality of life, as contrasted with environmental quality alone;"
- with respect to formal education systems, attention focused on "environmentalized education," which appeared to call for "determination (of) the contribution that environmental education should make to the renewal of education in general;"
- "the linking of environmental and developmental concerns in developed and developing areas of the world...;"
- better definition of needed environmental education research activities, with emphasis on "making use of research findings from other fields that deal with content or methodologies related to environmental education needs;"
- —the need for in-service training or continuing education, with priority specified for "...meeting the environmental education needs of professionals in various fields, e.g., teachers, scientists, engineers, administrators, planners, industrialists, agriculturalists, and trade unionists;"
- the need to develop standardized terms of reference and "perhaps a taxonomy to aid future program development;" and
- the fostering of bilateral, regional, and international cooperation in environmental education.

The 1977 Conference - Follow-up

Since 1977, efforts around the world have been directed toward the actualization of the recommendation of the Tbilisi Conference. Many have been at the instigation of and with the support of UNESCO and UNEP, and have been reported in UNESCO's quarterly newsletter *Connect*. Additional reports of world-wide UNESCO/

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UNEP initiatives include a paper by Blackburn (1983) and a summary by UNESCO (1984).

In the United States, much of the follow-up effort has been coordinated by Federal Interagency Committee on Education, Subcommittee on Environmental Education (FICE/SEE), by the Alliance for Environmental Education (AEE), and by the International Society for Environmental Education (ISEE). As mentioned above, FICE/SEE published its report in 1978; it called (FICE, 1978, pp. 12-13) for "a new phase of coordination of existing efforts and the development of a more rigorous intellectual base for environmental education." FICE/SEE did not define a role for itself or for U.S. governmental agencies, including those whose representatives make up the FICE/SEE group, but did identify as "...an important first phase in any effort to bring environmental education into the mainstream of national and international thinking about environmental education" the preparation of program policy at all levels of education and government, noting that "...the United States would enhance its ability to meet the challenge tendered by the Tbilisi recommendations by developing an environmental education policy statement as a basis for coordination among the many important federal program activities." (FICE, 1978, pp. 8-9) No such statement has emerged from U.S. government, though the FICE/SEE group did participate in the development of a compendium of descriptions of federal agency activities in environmental education (Disinger, 1978), and has on two occasions cooperated with AEE in staging national conferences directed toward the development of policy, leadership, and activity in environmental education.

AEE, an umbrella group whose member organizations include some 30 U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations maintaining interest and activity in environmental education (Pemberton, 1986), organized a 1978 conference in Washington, DC (Stapp, 1978) and a 1983 conference in Burlington, Vermont (Gustafson, 1983) which attempted to pursue the Tbilisi recommendations. The 1978 conference undertook the development of "a clear set of recommendations to further environmental education in the United States" based on an assessment of the "current situation in environmental education...in light of the Tbilisi recommendations," together with a review of recommendations of previous national conferences in the U.S. (Stapp, 1978, p. iii). Sixteen recommendations emerged, directed toward the federal role in national environmental education strategy, state-level networking, teacher inservice education, and accessibility and dissemination of materials. Each recommendation was targeted toward a specific audience or set of audiences. For each, major constraints to implementation were identified, strategies suggested, responsibilities assigned, and a timeline established.

The impracticability of many of the 1978 recommendations was noted in a keynote address to the 1983 conference—that more attention had been directed toward formulation of recommendations than toward considerations of implementation, and that the general expectation of federal government support and leadership was probably unrealistic (Gustafson, 1983, p. 4). The 1983 conference attempted to identify more specific activities, reporting 36 discrete recommendations targeted on the establishment of centers, literacy in areas of environmental concern, networking, and informational and financial support for environmental education (Gustafson, 1983, pp. 107-141). Immediately following the 1983 conference, the Alliance for Environmental Education began investigation of possibilities for the development of a United States national center for environmental education, the "top priority" which had been identified. Currently, the Alliance is targeting on the more modest—but still complex—task of the development of networking structures, building on a model designed and implemented by the Tennessee Valley Authority in its home area and attempting to replicate it in other sections of the United States (Purdy, 1986, pp. 1-2).

The 1987 Congress - Preparation

Recently, ISEE has become involved in the international aspects of the field, and has exercised initiative with respect to "Tbilisi + 10" planning. ISEE's slogan is "Education for Ecologically Sustainable Development," and calls for more infusion of ecological knowledge into the field of environmental education (Baldwin and Sacks, 1984, pp. 313-317). Two particular North American-based activities organized by ISEE were workshops associated with the 1984 and 1986 annual conferences of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAEE). In 1984, the workshop involved small group assessment of ecological and cultural imperatives which contribute to patterns of environmental exploitation of economic resources and of educational approaches "to improve the ability of both formal and citizen education to respond to crucial issues of biosphere survival" (Berberet and Sacks, 1984, pp. 42-45).

Among the outputs of the 1986 workshop was a process attempting to capture the experiences of more than 25 "individual programs (in the formal education sector) as goals, objectives, characteristics, strengths, program inhibitors, and future directions as a brief synthetical report that was developed through collaborative, negotiated effort" (Hart, 1986). Similar efforts, to date unsummarized, were developed by groups concerned with post-secondary environmental studies education and non-formal education. The elementary/secondary formal education group suggested that:

> "A Tbilisi + 10 conference should focus on teacher preparation programs, should re-examine the rationale for environmental education, encompass what is known about child growth and development, develop a more concrete K-12 framework, redefine the acceptable roles of teachers, re-examine the interdisciplinary goal in terms of practical applications, clarify and define more precisely those skills involved in issue resolution, and help teachers deal with values in classrooms and employ broad evaluation measures for programs and for students" (Hart, 1986).

Summary

As mentioned above, U.S. participation in the 1987 "Tbilisi + 10" conference is not yet well defined. However, many of the recommendations of the 1977 conference have received, and continue to receive, significant attention in this country. It is to be anticipated that the U.S. environmental education community will, at the very least, follow the progress of the 1987 conference with great interest. In many ways, for example, the 1977 conference served as a precursor to currently popular emphases targeted on international education and global education, though it has not generally been credited as such in the literature of the emerging fields. In any case, environmental concerns are by their nature international and global; similarly, international and global concerns by their nature must encompass environmental concerns, with respect to both "quality of life" and "natural resources management" considerations. It is both possible and logically attractive to argue that international/global education and environmental education, both defined broadly, must be mutually subsuming. It seems unreasonable to define either so that the other is excluded.

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